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AUTHOR Alston, Jerry G.
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ABSTRACT

In 1969, a federally funded program was instituted at Lee College to provide comprehensive educational opportunities for the hearing impaired. The program offers both academic and technical-occupational training, attendant counseling services in personal and social adjustment, housing assistance, and empathetic and cooperative instructors. Its major purpose is to mainstream the hearing impaired student into the hearing world, where his/her capabilities can be more fully developed and utilized. Lee College's 12 years of experience with serving the hearing impaired suggest the following guidelines for institutions interested in creating a similar program: (1) adequate financing should be obtained to cover the costs of interpreters, notetakers, tutors, and instructional visual aids; (2) recruiting efforts must entail the establishment of close working relationships with schools for the deaf and state rehabilitation agencies; (3) program administration will differ little from other programs, though the hiring, training, and assignment of interpreters will require special attention; (4) instructional facilities will not differ markedly from other programs, and little capital outlay will be necessary; (5) support services, including counseling, notetaking, tutoring, special interpretation services, and remedial studies, will be essential; and (6) a structured process of deaf awareness should be used to prepare faculty, support personnel, and the campus community for the influx of hearing impaired students. (HB)

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MAINSTREAMING THE HEARING IMPAIRED

JERRY G. ALSTON, Ph.D.

Vice President and Dean of Instruction
Lee College, Baytown, Texas

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MAINSTREAMING THE HEARING IMPAIRED

Since World War II, and most certainly since the late 1950's, college enrollments have increased dramatically. But there is one particular type of student whose population rates have increased even more — the handicapped student and more specifically the handicapped student with a hearing impairment. This growing collegiate subculture has been and continues to be an area of interest and concern for higher education administrators. It is estimated that, in addition to the multitude of hearing impaired students presently on college campuses, their numbers will increase by several thousand by the fall of 1983. Considering their number, it is surprising that more post secondary institutions have not sought to address themselves to developing programs for the deaf and actively recruited the deaf student. One community college pioneer in educating the hearing impaired is Lee College in Baytown, Texas.

In 1969, Lee College was chosen as one of four federally funded institutions selected to provide comprehensive educational opportunities for the hearing impaired. Other colleges selected to host hearing impaired programs in 1969 were Seattle Community College, Seattle, Washington; Delgado College in New Orleans, Louisiana, and St. Paul Institute in St. Paul, Minnesota. At Lee College, the thrust of the program came from an HEW Grant, administered through the Texas Rehabilitation Commission in conjunction with the College. The program's objectives were and are to provide both academic and technical-vocational training, with attendant service in personal and social areas. Actually, such objectives are not unlike those expressed in thousands of college catalogs, with one important distinction

prevailing: the delivery of instruction and services to students with inadequate communication and language skills, in a setting designed for persons with normal hearing, require that virtually all information be transmitted visually.

As a pioneer in instruction for the hearing impaired, what has Lee College learned that would be of value to institutions considering the development and implementation of programs for the deaf?

While several colleges offer post-secondary opportunities to the deaf, the major components of their programs consist of services such as interpreting, notetaking, and tutoring. These activities constitute the most fundamental requirements; however, other necessities are manifest. As stated previously, the Lee College program entails more than instruction in academic and technical-vocational courses through the use of interpreters; it involves special counseling services in personal and social adjustment, housing assistance, and an empathic and cooperative staff teaching courses in which hearing impaired students are enrolled. Essentially, an attempt is made to mainstream the hearing impaired student into the world of the non-handicapped, both educationally and socially. Although there is recognition of the silent sub-culture, Lee College's efforts are geared toward assimilation of the deaf into the hearing world where their capabilities can be more fully developed and utilized.

Given the fact that Lee College has now had a highly effective program for the hearing impaired for over a dozen years, what initial logistical problems did the institution face and have to overcome that other colleges should be made aware of, if a similar commitment is to be made

to serving the deaf? Any institution hoping to attract and serve deaf students must consider and be committed to at least six areas of necessity, which are as follows: (1) program financing; (2) the recruitment and/or referral of students; (3) program administration; (4) program personnel (instructors and interpreters); (5) facilities and instructional aids, and (6) support services.

Firstly, financing a hearing impaired program is no small task. Resources in dollars must be available to ensure students that once they have committed to an institution, that institution will have a program for them to complete. The greatest expense associated with such a program will be salaries and benefits for interpreters, hourly expenses for notetakers, and tutors — the latter two are usually refundable through state rehabilitation service funds. Since all instruction for the deaf will entail some form of visual utility, a considerable expense must be borne by the institution for the development or purchase of visual instructional aids which, incidentally, will probably enhance instruction for the non-handicapped student as well.

Lee College was fortunate for a number of years to have had both Federal and State assistance in financing its program. Recently, however, the only source of external income available to Lee College for the hearing impaired has come from the Texas Rehabilitation Commission for reimbursement of part-time interpreting services. The institution has borne all other program-related costs.

Secondly, the sources from which deaf students may be drawn may include the state, the geographic region and/or the nations' schools for the deaf, and referrals from state rehabilitation agencies. In

general, deaf students should meet normal admission requirements, although provision may be made for the admission of those students whose aptitudes promise success, though they may not meet all other admissions criteria.

Recruiting efforts will entail the establishment of close working relationships with residential and day schools for the deaf, and close interaction with the state's rehabilitation commission in order to anticipate significant referrals of students from the commission. Deaf students who, in the past, would have had access to vocational-technical training only at (for example) the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, should be a ready source for recruitment by community colleges with strong occupational/technical programs. Regardless of the source, there are many thousands of persons with hearing impairment who can benefit from instruction geared to circumventing their handicap.

Thirdly, the administration of a hearing impaired program will differ only slightly from any other programmatic operation. The duties of a program administrator will likely include student recruitment and admission, orientation, conducting special registrations for deaf students, coordinating tutoring services, counseling and advisory activities, budget administration, supervision and assignment of interpreters, interacting with social agencies, and orientation of faculty who work with the deaf.

What of the special program personnel who are so necessary in teaching the deaf, and where might they be found? Instructors of the hearing impaired in a mainstreaming institution usually have no hearing handicaps; neither, however, do they usually "sign." Consequently, they are assisted

by interpreters who may be full or part-time with the institution. Interpreters themselves may hold collegiate degrees, have expertise in subject or service areas, have been products of deaf households, and they may have been trained in interpreting at an early age. Colleges with programs which train interpreters for the hearing impaired have a ready source of interpreters from within their own program. In addition, State Rehabilitation Commissions will usually maintain a roster of interpreters who are available for full or part-time work with the hearing impaired. Any program for the hearing impaired should have a core of fulltime interpreters whose numbers can be supplemented by part-timers. Moreover, the length and difficulties of some classes will require the presence of two interpreters, since the act of interpretation is demanding both physically and mentally. Importantly, interpreters on salary are more readily available and willing to assume interpretation duties outside the classroom, of which there are many.

The scheduling of interpreters for instructional support is a very ticklish process. Interpreters who possess subject matter expertise should be matched with their subjects. One whose expertise and interest in diesel mechanics should be assigned to that and similar subject areas and not to English classes. Furthermore, instructors and interpreters must become accustomed to close personal communication prior to classes in order to discuss specific and technical vocabulary, the use of instructional media, and question and answer techniques.

Depending upon the number of sections of a given class, the availability of interpreters and the number of students to be served, program administrators must carefully blend the mixture of classes, students,

and interpreters within the college schedule.

For those who might think that the concept of serving the hearing impaired is a wonderfully altruistic notion but completely impractical because of the special physical facilities and monumental facility remodeling needed to accommodate such a program, suffice to say that the instructional facilities of an institution having a hearing impaired program will be nothing more than conventional. If modifications are to be made, they may entail only rearranging a classroom to ensure proper natural lighting utilization and positioning the visual media, the instructor, and students in better or more conducive locations. Due to the instructional nature of hearing impaired programs in community colleges, capital outlay for clinical facilities and auditory devices are quite unnecessary.

Community college instructors tend to characterize their mediated instructional techniques as learning stimuli. Consequently, electronic instructional aids used in conventional classes are especially helpful with mixed groups, particularly when the instructor and interpreter are attuned to one another. In addition, instructor-designed handouts, written objectives, and other print-based visual devices will enhance instruction not only for the deaf student in class but for the hearing student as well. Above all, it should be clear that the purpose of the visual devices and techniques in the classroom are to make the instruction more meaningful to all students. When film or motion pictures are to be used, subtitles are mandatory if the message is to reach the deaf student. It should also be mentioned here that the technology of programmed instruction is extremely beneficial for use with the hearing impaired due to

the nature of sequencing, feedback, reinforcement, evaluation, and repetition associated with such methodology.

While most of the topics previously mentioned relate to the process of instruction for the hearing impaired, it is important to mention the support services which, at Lee College, are considered to be absolutely essential to any hearing impaired project if deaf students are to be afforded the same opportunities for cultural enrichment, personal, and social activities as the total student group. Let's enumerate them briefly: counseling services; notetaking services; tutoring; special interpretation for activities other than instruction (such as artistic interpretation of music, poetry, prose, religious messages and the all important medical translations). In addition, there should be exclusive remedial studies in math, reading, and English for those deaf students whose achievement levels do not meet the requisite essentials for placement in collegiate level courses, just as there are similar courses for their hearing counterparts.

The special counseling activities, that is those activities in excess of the normal academic or vocational counseling functions, which should be included in personal and social counseling for the deaf are coping strategies for and assistance in banking, budgeting, food selection and procurement, housing contracts, study techniques and habits, and interpersonal relationships. Such services should be initiated during an early orientation or preparatory session with the deaf students. During the summer before their first enrollment with Lee College, first-time deaf students join us for a six-week orientation to the college and college life, with emphasis also given to independent living. During

the evaluation phase of the orientation, the students are exposed to a hands-on approach to the various technical-vocational programs of the college; they are evaluated according to their observed interests and demonstrated abilities and are tested to determine achievement levels, academic and/or vocational interests, coordination and dexterity, reasoning abilities, and emotional maturity and stability. The results of these sessions aid both the college staff and the rehabilitation commission staff in program selection and development for each hearing impaired student.

One final consideration for a college committed to instruction for the deaf is how it might facilitate a receptive and supportive attitude toward the deaf on campus and in the college community. In other words, how might a process of deaf awareness be structured to prepare a campus for an influx of hearing impaired students? There are probably several alternatives, all equally effective, which a college might effect to promote deaf awareness. Briefly, I want to share with you what was done at Lee College over twelve years ago and what still goes on today, to some extent.

Consultants with backgrounds and training in the psychology of the deaf were brought to campus to orient faculty and staff to establishing relationships with the deaf. Liaisons were established with HEW's deaf and hard-of-hearing specialists and the University of Texas Speech and Hearing Clinic. Exposure to and information from these sources helped pave the way for the deaf student at Lee College. By pre-conditioning, personnel were made aware of the wide range of capabilities of deaf learners, of their abilities and interests, and the various instruc-

tional methodologies with which they might be served. The entire college counseling staff, individually and in groups, attended numerous workshops and clinics on working with the deaf and hearing impaired, and on the implications of deafness for personal, family, and community life as related to socialization and self-actualization.

Instructors learned the methods of working with interpreters, techniques and suggestions for conducting classes which included hearing impaired students, and the arrangement of classrooms best suited for hearing and deaf students.

Classes in fingerspelling, sign, and Ameslon were conducted for faculty, staff, and support personnel. Those taking the initial classes at Lee College were secretaries, cafeteria and snack bar workers, teachers, counselors, lab assistants and a few custodians. Several local churches sent personnel to those early sessions, and later made spaces available in church for the deaf, with interpreters available to sign the services for them.

The example just given about the churches was one of the first indications that the community was both sympathetic to and interested in the college's undertaking for the deaf. To be sure, the pictorial "sign" articles in the local daily newspaper brings to the attention of the general public basic sign language vocabulary, and promotes a willingness in the community to use sign language.

The hearing impaired need the access to higher education that the Lee College program encourages. But, there are thousands of academically capable deaf persons in our country who still have limited higher education choices because of the relatively small number of college programs

available to them. Considering the number of deaf students who, because of finances, distance, or personal reasons, are unable to attend either of the nation's major institutions for the deaf, it is likely that the community college programs currently serving the deaf will thrive and prosper. However, there is still an unmet demand for more spaces for the hearing impaired in all colleges and universities. If this conference represents an intent to further educational opportunities for the deaf, then its sponsors and participants are to be commended.

It is heartening to witness the recent interest shown in the hearing impaired, for it now appears that this subculture will soon be realizing equal opportunity to higher education access.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
8118 Math-Sciences Building
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